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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to reduce the instances of negative behavior exhibited by students in a special education setting. Various interventions were initiated and implemented, such as engaging students in conflict resolution workshops, involving student in extracurricular activities so as to help them use leisure time constructively, and encouraging them to write letters and keep journals. These implementations gave mixed results. The number of physical and verbal conflicts between students decreased in both the classroom and the lunch room; however, the students' covert negative behavior patterns remained constant and there was no marked improvement in self-esteem. Even so, some of the students displayed a sense of significance and capability that many of them had not experienced before. The most encouraging part of the implementation focused on a number of students who came to understand that they had control over the escalation or de-escalation of conflict, and these students' willingness to employ positive techniques to resolve conflict. It was concluded that decreasing the negative behavior patterns of students would be more effective if conflict resolution workshops remained a permanent part of the curriculum, coupled with family involvement and support. (RJM)

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To Decrease the Negative Behavior of High School Students by Increasing Pro-social Behavior

ED 383 971

by

Catherine Cabeza

Cluster 48

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program.
In Child and Youth Studies in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

1995

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL PAGE

This practicum took place as described

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This practicum report was submitted by Catherine Cabeza under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

3-16-95
Date of Final Approval of Report

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This practicum is dedicated to all the youth. We, as a community, are responsible to help them meet the challenges of their everyday existence and help them fulfill their future hopes and dreams.

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ABSTRACT

To Decrease the Negative Behavior of High School Students by Increasing Pro-social Behavior
Cabeza, Catherine F., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies.
Special Education/Emotionally Handicapped/High School/Urban/ Conflict Resolution Techniques/Life Space Crisis Intervention/Extracurricular Activities/journal writing/ letters/self-esteem/

This practicum was designed to reduce the instances of negative behavior exhibited by students in a special education setting.

The writer initiated and implemented different strategies. She employed Life Space Crisis Intervention, and engaged students in conflict resolution workshops. Students were also involved in extracurricular activities so as to help them use leisure time constructively. Journal and letter writing were unplanned strategies that offered students additional positive channels.

The results of the implementation were mixed. The number of physical and verbal conflicts between students were decreased in the classroom and the lunch room. However, the students' covert negative behavior patterns remained constant, and there was no marked improvement in self-esteem. The most encouraging part of the implementation focused on a number of students understanding that they have control over the escalation or de-escalation of conflict, and their willingness to employ positive techniques to conflict. The writer concludes that decreasing the negative behavior patterns of students would be more effective if conflict resolution workshops remained a permanent part of the curriculum, coupled with family involvement and support, and exposing the methods in the communities where the students reside.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The work setting is located in a large urban community. The community's population is divided into smaller community school boards and districts. The school boards and districts are funded by the federal, state, and local governments to provide free public education to all youngsters ages 3-21. Each district serves a number of schools with several thousand students of mixed cultural and economic backgrounds.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

One district serves only the special education population which includes the gifted and the handicapped. The work setting where the writer is employed is part of the special education city-wide district. Her school is a special education co-ed high school for students ages 14 to 21 years of age. The school serves approximately 200 students.

There are two classifications of handicapped students assigned to the school. One group of students has been diagnosed as severely emotionally disturbed and are classified as Supervised Instructional Environment VIIB (SIE

VIIB). These students have a short attention span, are hyperactive, have a low tolerance level, and at times, they can be extremely violent to others and/or to themselves.

The majority of these students are also at-risk students who have a high percentage of absenteeism and low academic achievement levels. They are also deficient in communication skills and possess inadequate social skills.

The second group of students is diagnosed as Specialized Instructional Environment IV (SIE IV). These students have academic deficiencies in either math, reading, or communication skills. They also demonstrate limited social development. Social development is defined as having problems working in large group situations, demonstration of "inappropriate responses (withdrawal or acting-out behaviors) to frustrating situations,... and difficulty in understanding and expressing reasons for reactions and feeling in social situations" (Board of Education Regulations).

The one major difference between the two groups is the degree of acting out behavior demonstrated. The SIE IV group of students supposedly demonstrate less violent behavior towards others as compared to the SIE VIIB group of students. Many of The SIE IV group have also been classified as having learning disabilities.

The student population is culturally mixed, however African-Americans and Latino-Americans are the dominant

student population. Many of the students do not live in the community. They either come by school bus or use public transportation. The majority of them come from dysfunctional families, single parent households, and/or receive public assistance. A large minority of the male students have a history of delinquency or have been arrested for various offenses.

The administrators and supervisors of the school are the principal and the assistant principal. They supervise 22 instructional teachers and 18 paraprofessionals who work directly with the students in the classroom setting. The organization also has 13 staff members who comprise the pupil personnel related services. These services include three Crisis Intervention Resource Teachers (CIRT), two guidance counselors, two social workers, one psychologist, a speech teacher, an attendance teacher, a family worker, an educational evaluator, and a transition coordinator. There is also a private group of five clinicians who are assigned to provide counseling services to students. They were brought in to reduce the caseload of the previous mentioned counselors and psychologist. The school structure also consists of 17 additional persons who serve as custodians, office workers, or security personnel.

Within the school complex, the writer is directly responsible for one cluster that is made up of six official class homerooms, 10 instructional teachers, nine

paraprofessionals, and 68 students. The writer was given supervision of the cluster that "houses" the SIE IV population. The SIE IV population totals 48 students. The SIE IV students and the 20 SIE VIIB students encompass the cluster. Her administrative and supervisory roles are utilized to assist the administrators and staff members with school policy and procedures. Her formal title is a Crisis Intervention Resource Teacher (CIRT).

As a CIRT, her job responsibilities are extensive and are divided into two main categories. As a crisis intervention teacher, the writer serves as a peace maker. The role of a peace maker is to diffuse potential destructive behavior by students. And, at times, when the students are already in the midst of an outburst, her role is to assist students with calming down techniques to deflect a volatile situation. The CIRT must be knowledgeable and possess behavior management skills such as behavior modification techniques. These skills are essential in order to assist teachers in preventing classroom behavior problems and reducing conflicts between students and staff.

The writer is also a mediator and conducts student, parent and teacher conferences as part of her crisis intervention responsibilities. The purpose of the conferences is to negotiate and implement strategies to increase appropriate student behavior. On many occasions, the student is an active participant in the decision-making

process.

As a resource teacher, the writer supports the teachers in a different capacity. She orders supplies, materials and equipment to facilitate classroom instruction. In addition, the writer helps the staff with lesson plans, coordination of school trips, implementing special activities in school, conducting workshops, and facilitating meetings.

The writer is qualified to work with the special education population; she has worked with students in special education for the past eleven years. She has a bachelor of arts degree in physical education as well as a masters degree in special education, and a professional diploma in administration and supervision. Her extensive background also includes affiliation and involvement with youth in community programs for the past 15 years.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

One of the problems with the new students and students who were in the school prior to this year, was their exhibition of negative behavior towards peers and adults. The negative behavior was constant; sometimes it was covert. The students were uncooperative or unresponsive to directions or completing class assignments. They came late to class frequently, or not at all.

Other times, the negative behavior was more blatant; they were disrespectful to adults and/or to peers. They were confrontational, verbally and/or physically to classmates especially, but also to staff.

Problem Documentation

The students were diagnosed as having limited social skills development by the Committee on Special Education

Services. Most of them demonstrated unacceptable behavior towards peers as well as staff. Examples of inappropriate behavior towards classmates and staff were numerous.

Students did not know how to play games without arguing with each other. On numerous occasions, the writer was summoned to the gym class to remove students who were verbally abusive to each other because of arguments relating to a basketball game, handball game, or another sport. Usually, the arguments pertained to the rules. At other times, the disagreements stemmed from a call made by one of the students. The other student(s) refused to acknowledge the call or to agree with it.

On occasions, students interfered with other students who were playing a game. The students who were disruptive seemed to resent the notion that other students were contented to play without their participation. The despondent students preferred interrupting the game and causing confrontation with the students who were playing.

Students demonstrated poor sportsmanship. When they lost a game, it was because the other player(s) cheated. They couldn't accept the fact that they lost fair and square. Many times, they blamed the lost on their teammates. They accused their teammates of not knowing how to play. Often, when the student(s) were losing they would rather quit the game, than to finish it.

Some students refused to participate in games or engage

in projects different from their preference. For example, during gym class, if the students preferred playing basketball, they wouldn't want to play anything else. They even harassed the others who were willing to participate in a different activity. They called their classmates "sissies" for playing. On some occasions, the disgruntled students took the balls away from the others so no one could play the game.

Students were extremely critical towards their peers. They had the tendency to make fun of each other and call each other and their families negative, inflammatory names alluding to physical appearance or manner of dress. By doing this, the students tormented their intended victim, but aroused the laughter of other classmates.

Students' inappropriate behavior was demonstrated in other areas as well. In classes, students were uncooperative and refused to participate in assignments; some of them put their heads on the desk. Others refused to answer questions or engage in written work.

Physical conflicts were routine. Teachers and students were hurt in fights as well as confronted with weapons drawn by students. Security officers and in some cases police were summoned to calm disturbances.

Furthermore, community residents complained about the behavior of the students. Written complaints about the students' behavior were brought to the attention of

politicians and the local police precinct. For example, the managers of the local McDonald's restaurant criticized the students' behavior in the restaurant and the surrounding parking lot. The managers accused the students of verbal abuse to customers and workers as well as having physical confrontations with each other.

One of the managers from the store was even assaulted by the students. Table 1 highlights some of the negative behaviors and the frequency of the complaints during a week.

Table 1

Students' Negative Behavior in the Cluster

Classification	Negative Behavior	Referrals
Participation	Student arrives to class late	103
	Student doesn't begin class work in a timely manner	93
	Student refuses to accept assistance from staff	42
	Student leaves the room during class	60
Interaction	Student has verbal confrontation with peers	84
	Student has physical confrontation with peers	20
	Student has verbal confrontation with staff	56
	Student has physical confrontation with staff	7
Other Incidents	Student has been removed for weapons possession	3
	Student destroyed property	1
	Student leaves school without authorization	35
	Student has been suspended from school (In house)	3
	Student has had a principal or superintendent's suspension	1
	Student has had confrontation with community residents	0

Note: the number of reported incidents refers to students in the writer's cluster

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Students also exhibited behavior that impeded their chances of personal success and was an outgrowth of negative feelings about themselves. In the writer's cluster, six girls were pregnant at the time of the practicum, while eleven already have children. The writer is certain that low self esteem contributed to the pregnancies. Girls are desperate for someone to love them and to consider them important. They listen to their companions who promise them affection and attention.

The writer also believes that low self esteem contributes to females' negative behavior among peers. In the writer's school, females were also involved in physical clashes as well as instigators in fights among classmates, both males and females. Often, their interpersonal relationships with other groups of girls were confrontational focused around false rumors or innuendos. They also expected their boyfriends to uphold their honor, and any hint that someone said anything negative about them was cause for reprisal.

Causative Analysis

Students recognized only verbal outburst and physical confrontation as solutions to conflict. At home, students are reprimanded by family members who advocate shouting and/or physical threats. Among peers, students were accustomed to resolving disagreements with verbal insults and fights. In other words, students resolved differences by what they witnessed as appropriate responses to conflict.

Students' self esteem was low and they looked for ways to be noticed, often embracing negative behavior. Other students had poor self esteem because they believed that the significant people in their lives did not think highly of them.

Adolescents experienced stress and they did not know how to handle anxiety. Their negative behavior was an overt response to a deeper problem where they "acted out" hoping someone would notice them, and asked them what was the problem.

Students did not have positive feelings about school and/or the community, therefore, they had no respect for staff, classmates, residents, or property. They verbally harassed others, wrote on buildings, and exhibited other negative behavior in an attempt to highlight their feelings. Students did not have sufficient constructive activities to engage in, or refused to participate in valuable programs during their leisure time. They were bored and searched for

excitement.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The literature review reinforced the writer's opinion as to the causes for negative behavior as well as enlightened the writer to other possible causes.

Several authors (Elliott and Gresham, 1987; Sheldon et al, 1983) stated that social skills development correlate with present development of children and dictate future behavior. Those with adequate skills function more positively in every aspect of society. Insufficient social skills development interferes with school achievement, job performance, and integration in the community. In addition, students with deficient social skills have higher incidence of juvenile delinquency, poor peer relationships, and dropping out of school. Often, the consequence of students' negative behavior is rejection by peers and adults. Once the students are rejected, they engage in subsequent antisocial behavior that solidifies their rejection by others. Deficits in social skills are what often times distinguish emotionally disturbed students from non-handicapped students.

Warger (1990) has a similar view to the above mentioned authors. She also maintained that one of the reasons for students' inability to resolve conflict in a positive manner is their limited social skills development.

She identified other negative consequences of limited

social skills. She considered inadequate social skills development responsible for poor communication skills, limited problem solving strategies, as well as inferior interpersonal skills.

Bullis (1990) is another author who concurs. He stated that by definition students who are emotionally disturbed are socially deficient that is, they have insufficient social skills. Their limited social skills negatively impact on students' experience in employment as well as in the community.

Harter (1990) asserted that there could be several possible causes for adolescents engaging in negative behavior. One such reason is self esteem. Self esteem influences the behavior of children especially adolescents. Self esteem is based on several critical factors.

How adolescents perform in competencies that are important to them will influence their esteem. For example, if academic success is important to adolescents, and they are not functioning well, their sense of esteem will be low. Also, how adolescents perceive themselves as well as how others perceive them, influences their esteem. Adolescents tend to imitate the attitudes that others have of them. Therefore, if adolescents perceive that people do not like them, they will engage in activities to give reasons not to be liked.

She further suggests that adolescents with poor self

esteem are depressed, anxiety prone, lack motivation, and energy. Adolescents who are in a psychological state of depression are listless and more susceptible to negative influences. Since they cannot meet the standards of the dominant society, they choose peers that are more like them and accepting of their behavior.

Some authors (Rothman, 1991; Sadker & Sadker, 1994) stated that gender inequity influences low self esteem among girls. They maintained that schools are partly responsible for girls' low self esteem. Teachers have a tendency to acknowledge boys in the class by calling on them more often as well as encouraging them to articulate their answers. When girls are struggling for an answer, teachers are impatient and curt. Furthermore, girls are discouraged from entering such fields as science and mathematics. Rothman acknowledged that studies confirmed most adolescents' self esteem is lower during adolescence as compared to their younger years. However, the decline in self esteem is more severe for girls. Pregnancies and eating disorders such as bulimia and anorexia nervosa illustrate some of the problems experienced by them.

Harter (1990) also believed that adolescents' behavior is also influenced by the struggle for identity. Adolescents are in a developmental stage in their lives trying to integrate their self into the multiple roles that confront them. In that struggle, adolescents are exposed to positive

selves and negative selves. Those who do not have a balance between the positive selves and negative selves have a tendency to exhibit negative behavior. "If one's negative possible self is not checked or countered by a positive self, one may be more likely to engage in antisocial behaviors consistent with one's negative self" (p. 375).

Wood and Long (1991) asserted that negative behavior is a reaction to stressful situations children and adolescents are confronted with every day. Their behavior is a reaction to their feelings. Without adult guidance, that normally is absent, adolescents heed to situations negatively.

Mantzicopoulos (1990) asserted that students who utilize defensive coping strategies when struggling with school failure, have a tendency to have low academic achievement. How is this theory related to the causes for negative behavior exhibited by students?

Mantzicopoulos explained that defensive coping behaviors include blaming others for failure, as well as students engaging in destructive self-derogation. The writer hypothesizes that students who blame others for academic failure will also accuse peers for problems in other areas as well. Placing blame means that students do not take responsibility for their actions. In the specific cases mentioned previously involving disagreements between students, conflict escalated because students failed to recognize their culpability in the discord.

Berman (1990) declared that students are feeling powerless and disconnected with society. This theory hints at why some students exhibit negative behavior in the community. For instance, they write graffiti on public and private property, vandalize parks, and create a nuisance by playing loud music. These behaviors signal alienation towards the community.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

Goal

The following goal for this practicum was to improve students' prosocial behavior.

Expected Outcomes

The following were expected outcomes:

Outcome # 1. 16 of 20 students will decrease the instances of negative behavior by at least three fewer instances.

Outcome # 2. Five of eight students identified as consistently involved in fights will decrease the occurrence of fights by at least three fewer instances.

Outcome # 3. Ten students will engage in at least three extracurricular activities in the school.

Outcome # 4. Five students will participate in at least one collaborative school/community project.

Outcome # 5. At least ten of the twenty students will show evidence of perceived self-esteem improvement by having at least three more positive responses on the post test as

compared to pre-intervention comments on the self esteem inventory.

Measurement of Outcomes

To measure the outcomes, the writer was to employ different instruments.

To evaluate the decrease in negative behavior, a rating sheet (see Appendix A) was to be utilized. The rating sheet highlighted the behaviors observed to judge whether or not those behaviors were decreased. Baseline observations were conducted prior to intervention. Data was gathered based on at least three weeks of observations in order to gather as much accurate data as possible regarding students' behavior patterns. The staff would conduct observations of students in the class, during lunch hour supervision, or whenever they encountered them in the halls. Other crisis intervention teachers would note any other confrontations they witnessed or instances where they intervened.

To determine whether or not the students decreased the number of physical confrontations, the same rating sheets were to be analyzed. Other deans, the administration team, and classroom staff were to evaluate the students' progress by completing the rating sheets.

To determine whether or not ten students engaged in at least three extracurricular activities in the school, an attendance sheet (see Appendix B) was to be distributed. The

same measurement tool was to be used to determined if at least five students participated in a joint/community project.

To ascertain whether or not ten students' self esteem improved, students werre to complete a self esteem inventory (see Appendix C) prior to implementation and directly after the implementation period. Scores were to be compared to determine whether or not students demonstrated a positive difference in self esteem.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

Students displayed negative behavior towards peers and adults. To find solutions to the problem, the writer sought the support of professionals in the field. She discovered that much of the literature reviewed had common solutions, while others were vastly different.

Some professionals think that improving students' social skills will enhance interpersonal relationships with peers and adults as well as enhance their chances of improving academic achievement, integration in the community, and job opportunities. Improvement in any of these areas should decrease the negative behavior exhibited by students and improve prosocial behavior.

Sheldon (1983) is a proponent of this method. Although she recognizes that there are problems with developing social skills curriculum, she's a strong advocate for this approach. She believes that the important criteria is to identify the social skills, employ different techniques to

teach the curriculum, and be practical.

In addition, she advocated that social skills training should be taught in school settings and other environments. The more exposed the students are to social skills training, the more effective the program will be in developing students' skills. Students should be given concrete situations they are familiar with, and also recognize that specific settings might require different behaviors.

Warger (1990) also suggests social skills curriculum as a technique to decrease inappropriate behavior. She recommends cognitive-behavior techniques before students are employed in job situations so as to improve their chances of maintaining employment as well as decreasing the possibility of confrontations with supervisors or peers.

She cites studies that confirm handicapped workers more often lose employment because of personal and social difficulties rather than for non performance of work responsibilities. Her viewpoint is relevant to the writer's program because the school is in the process of looking for employment for many of the students. There is a possibility that most of them will not maintain employment because of the social skills deficits. Warger's analysis may set new light on how the staff should further prepare the students for employment.

Zingmond (1990) suggests Behavior Control Activities (BCA), a school survival skills curriculum, as a technique

to decrease negative behavior. She strongly recommends BCA for students who are consistently engaged in misbehavior especially those who are often suspended or punished. She theorizes that when students take responsibility for their actions (internal locus control) this is ideally the first step towards more positive behavior.

She envisions students with better internal locus control realizing how their negative behavior impacts on others, while simultaneously learning alternate methods of response. She purports that the best techniques to employ for students to recognize their behavior are role playing and simulations. However, she also acknowledges that for these techniques to be effective, students must be taught to be observers as well as how to document incidents.

Students are given situations and are asked to analyze them, suggest different resolutions, and examine the consequences of each response. Students are invited to role play and often are video-taped in order to augment discussions. Students are also encouraged to practice their new learned techniques in every day encounters and document the scenario and the results.

Some authors suggest different alternatives to decreasing negative behavior while utilizing some of the previous mentioned strategies. Rhone (1992) identifies counseling and mentor programs as excellent intervention strategies to decrease negative behavior. She employed

volunteer teachers and personnel from community agencies as presenters and mentors to engage students in different activities during a 12 week group guidance and individual counseling sessions.

Some of the activities identified examples of everyday stress encountered by the students as well as examining stress they might experience in the immediate future. Presenters taught critical thinking skills in order to help students respond negatively to substance abuse involvement, sexual relations, or other anti-social behavior. They also encourage students to be actively engaged in the activities by employing a multitude of resources to support their efforts. The presenters used videos, slides, activity sheets, and illustrated typical incidences faced by students.

Rhone emphatically states that the cooperation of community agencies and staff as role models and presenters were critical contributors to the success of the program. The participants' overall negative behavior decreased dramatically as a result of the counseling sessions and employment of role models from the school and the community. She highly recommends others trying the strategies she employed.

Wood and Long (1991) strongly recommend Life Space Intervention (LSI) as a solution to negative behavior. LSI is a behavior management strategy. It's a therapeutic

process that helps children through oral communication to reexamine a current crisis and seek alternate solutions. With the support of adults, students are encouraged to ponder the crisis in order to make specific changes.

LSI's goal is to change the behavior while simultaneously reducing anxiety. LSI's intent is to empower students to be responsible for their actions and help them to gain a broader understanding of their behavior and feelings. During this process, the advocates of LSI theorize that students' self esteem should be enhanced because they take full responsibility for their actions, and are active in the decision-making process to change their behavior. Students learn prosocial behavior while learning to understand their feelings, and how to respond positively to negative feelings.

Berman's (1990) solutions to decreasing negative behavior encompass many different strategies. He theorizes that students who are connected to the world have a sense of empowerment and interdependence with others. He hints that those who are alienated are powerless and therefore are more prone to engage in negative behavior. What adults have to do is to help students to develop a positive relationship with society. That relationship begins within the home environment, the school community, and the neighborhood in which they live. Students have to recognize their interdependence with the rest of the world if they are going

to be participatory members of the community.

Berman identifies global education, environmental studies, and multicultural education as current programs attempting to teach students about their interdependence with the rest of the world.

He also suggests other ideas to cultivate a sense of social responsibility and community among students. Students need to be taught basic social skills in communication, cooperation, and conflict management.

In particular, Berman notes that specific support need to be given students in organizational skills, consensus building skills, and problem solving skills. He recommends role playing and journal writing as techniques to foster students' understanding of other viewpoints.

He also suggests students be encouraged to use their talents to contribute to the lives of others. The type of community service is not relevant. What is important is that students choose the community service. Furthermore, students should be exposed to role models from the community and the various organizations in the community that are working to improve the neighborhood.

Brown and Greenspan (1983) report on an intervention strategy, SAVY (Socially Adept Verbalization of Youth). SAVY attempts to increase the adjustment of high school students to school by decreasing egocentrism, and simultaneously helping them acquire prosocial behavior within the school

setting. Subjects selected for the intervention were considered high risks students because of their low economic status as well as their dependency on drugs, history of delinquent behavior, and products of abusive families. Furthermore, they were assigned to their present school because of poor attendance patterns, serious discipline problems, and low academic achievement.

The exercises and activities in the SAVY curriculum are designed to engage students in examining alternate choices in the decision-making process, and helping them realize that they could be "winners" in conflict situations without being verbally abusive or challenging to authority figures or peers. The results of the SAVY curriculum demonstrate that such training enables many students to avoid conflict or at least diminish socially maladaptive patterns of behavior.

Hammond (1990) is a proponent of the Positive Adolescent Choices Training (PACT) program as a strategy to prevent violence among students. PACT actually is an adaptation of an existing well-tested cognitive behavioral training program. However, the difference between PACT and the other program is PACT's targeted population, African-American youth.

PACT targets specific social skills facilitating students' chances of resolving conflict amiably. Similar to other programs, PACT utilizes videotape, role-playing, and

employs role models.

What seems to make it somewhat different from other programs, is its extensive use of psychodrama and intensive rehearsals.

Smith (1987) believes that the non-handicapped population should be involved in the personal life of handicapped students. She details the positive impact non-handicapped people can have in the lives of the handicapped and their parents. She started a neighborhood awareness program. She held discussions with the children about her handicapped daughter and how she is different but at the same time similar to them in so many ways. She even encouraged the children to be companions to her daughter. She paid adolescents to be friends and resource persons to her daughter. Although the latter strategy had a few problems, it was of mutual benefit to her daughter and the adolescents who were the resources persons. One of the resource persons became her daughter's best friend.

Bredehoft (1983) hypothesizes that involving parents in democratic parenting will decrease the incidence of conflict within the family as well as improve parents and adolescents' self esteem. He identifies several programs that are associated with the democratic model, but actually only investigates one of them, Self-Esteem: A Family Affair.

The model involves parents and one adolescent child participating in a structured curriculum over a ten week

perceived decrease in conflict among adolescents and their fathers.

Although the subjects of the study were professionals and highly educated, he suggested that the curriculum should also be field tested with less educated and lower socioeconomic groups.

The writer sees a correlation between positively resolving conflict within the family to resolving conflict students have with peers and adults in the community as well as in school. Once students learn different conflict resolutions strategies, they can apply them to different situations.

The literature review reveals interesting and dynamic intervention strategies to curtail negative behavior. The writer is prepared to employ some of these suggestions.

Description of Selected Solutions

The writer realized that many of the students had a history of antisocial conduct and the intervention must be specific to each student. She also recognized that the change in behavior would be slow. Therefore, she was prepared to concentrate her efforts with a few of the students in order to have a greater impact. She chose the 20 students who are from the SIE VIIB population. After closer examination of the number of incidents of negative behavior, the writer recognized that a large proportion of the incidents emanated from the students in this classification

(see Table 2). She wanted to expend her energies and intervention strategies with this group.

Table 2

Negative Behavior of Targeted Students

Classification	Negative Behavior	Referrals
Participation	Student arrives to class late	78
	Student doesn't begin class work in a timely manner	61
	Student refuses to accept assistance from staff	27
	Student leaves the room during class	36
Interaction	Student has verbal confrontation with peers	66
	Student has physical confrontation with peers	13
	Student has physical confrontation with staff	37
	Student has verbal confrontation with staff	4
Other Incidents	Student has been removed for weapons possession	3
	Student destroyed property	1
	Student leaves school without authorization	23
	Student has been suspended from school (In house)	2
	Student has had a principal or superintendent's suspension	1
	Student has had confrontation with community residents	2

Note: the number of reported incidents refers to students in the writer's cluster

The writer expected to implement different strategies to decrease students' negative behavior. One of the approaches she planned to employ was Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSI). She was introduced to LSI when she attended mandated district-wide workshops. After attending several workshops, she thought that the techniques employed in LSI could be effective with the students and serve as a model for teachers to execute.

She planned to use the strategy with students and also share the LSI techniques with staff through workshops. She expected a few of the teachers to utilize the techniques in order to de-escalate any crisis or potential crisis. The staff who chose not to employ the strategy at least would understand the process so that when a student re-entered the classroom, the teacher knew that the student had resolved the problem.

LSI techniques help interventionists to recognize cues about students' behavior that could deflect a confrontation, or help to diffuse a crisis in which a student is already displaying rage or violence.

LSI techniques also assist students to focus on what the situation is and guides him/her to discover operative responses to the problem. Affirmative results allow the student to re-enter the community, in this case, the classroom, gym, or lunchroom areas. Students then are capable of responding positively to peers or staff who may

engage them in conversations about the situation. Furthermore, the skills employed in LSI techniques are intended to help students internalize the process so that they can independently resolve peacefully other crises they encounter in school or in the community.

The writer was also prepared to try other conflict resolution strategies. She visited central board headquarters, inquired of curriculum specialists, and investigated commercial products as resources for curriculum. She planned to employ concrete examples of incidences involving students, and encouraged them to participate in discussions and simulations.

Over the course of the practicum, conflict resolution lessons were to encompass several areas. Prepared Lessons were going to explore different examples of conflict and analyze problem solving strategies to conflict. Communication and listening skills were to be outlined and investigated. The students were also to be engaged in exploring feelings, in particular those feelings that lead to conflict. The writer intended to help the students to analyze the causes of such feelings, and help them to articulate those ideas without feeling vulnerable or powerless.

Compromise and mediation skills were also going to be highlighted in order to help students discover other positive resolutions to conflict.

The writer expected to utilize videos, activity sheets, comics, role playing techniques, and simulations as part of the curriculum. She believed that the more actively engaged the students were in the curriculum, and the utilization of different materials, the more chance for students to internalize some of the positive alternatives to conflict.

The writer was also prepared to invite people from the community to participate in the discussions and serve as role models. She thought that the community presence would be beneficial to the students, staff, and residents. The students could experience residents who were concerned about them and interested in what they did. The staff also would encounter other professionals who shared an investment in the students. Involvement of the community residents allowed them to share their expertise, and give them the opportunity to feel valued.

The writer also expected to engage students in extracurricular activities. She believed that if students were engaged in positive activities during leisure time, it would help students manage time more constructively. She hypothesized that students might be more willing to engage in constructive activities in their communities if they were exposed to them in the school.

The writer theorized that the various strategies should decrease negative behavior, increase prosocial behavior, and improve students' self esteem. The writer didn't think one

strategy by itself would decrease students' negative behavior. However, a combination of approaches might affect positive change in the students' conduct.

Report of Action Taken

The writer implemented many of the strategies she enumerated in the above chapter. However, many strategies were never executed, and other unplanned tactics evolved once she began the practicum.

Planned Interventions

Life Space Crisis Intervention - Staff Development

The writer began implementation by conducting life space crisis intervention workshops with staff. The workshops were incorporated during staff development days since it was impossible to schedule the workshops at any other time. Initially, two workshops were arranged to accommodate all of the staff. A second series of workshops were planned for a later date.

During the first two workshops, staff were introduced to life space crisis intervention (LSI) and the conflict resolution curriculum that would be taught to the students. Life Space Intervention techniques were introduced to the staff so that they would at least be familiar with the techniques used by the Crisis Intervention Teacher to de-escalate conflict.

The staff was oriented to the conflict cycle and learned how they had the capacity to reduce conflict rather than escalate conflict. The writer helped the staff become aware of cues or tips that they could watch for in order to help diffuse a problem before it manifested into a conflict.

The writer also reviewed with the staff, some of the crises that teenagers in general undergo in regards to cognitive thinking, physical development, and social-emotional growth. She reminded them how all of these crises impact on the behavior patterns of the adolescent.

During the workshops, the writer was apologetic about the amount of material covered. The time restraints limited her presentation, even though she attempted to cover as much material as possible without overextending the staff's attention span.

The writer also experienced an unexpected obstacle that pressed her time even further for one of the workshops. No matter how well you plan, sometimes the best laid plans go for naught. The staff at one of the initial workshops were shortchanged some of the material because of a scheduling problem of another presenter.

The workshop was delayed for 30 minutes while the administration waited for another presenter to arrive so that the different workshops planned for staff development day could begin simultaneously. When the presented arrived, she informed the principal her workshop would have to be

shortened. Since her workshop was to end earlier than expected, and the principal wanted all the workshops to conclude about the same time, the writer was forced to accelerate her workshop. This was an inconvenience and unfair to the staff in the morning session. The staff wanted to continue the workshop, but was informed that all workshops had to end at the same time in order to manage the rest of the day.

Life Space Crisis Intervention - Students

Life Space Intervention techniques for students were introduced during an orientation workshop that included themes on conflict resolution management and the restructuring of the time-out room.

The students were given an overview of Life Space Crisis Intervention and the techniques the writer would employ. The writer defined LSI and demonstrated examples of how she would attempt to help students to alleviate an explosive situation by helping them to de-escalate the emotions and the stress that contributed to the conflict. She also mentioned that she would help students examine ways to avoid conflict.

It was explained to the students that occasionally the staff would remove students from the classroom when the teachers thought there was a problem developing. The students should be aware that this would happen, and not to take it personally. The removal was a precaution, a safety

measure to prevent a conflict from occurring.

The students were also notified that there would be a "time-out" and "cool-down" room. They would be allow to go to this room to calm down in order to prevent confrontation and/or to discuss a matter that was disturbing them.

"Time-Out/Cool-Down" Room

When the students came to the "time-out/cool-down" room, the writer discussed the circumstances with them in order to help them negotiate the problem. She would ask questions to discover what was the stressful incident that brought them to the room. The CIRT would ask the students to give a detail description in a time sequential order of what took place. She would also ask them to identify others involved. After this give and take feedback, the CIRT asked the students what options were available to them to resolve the conflict. (LSCI distinguishes itself from other techniques because the student arrives at the solutions on his own). Included in those choices would be whether the students wanted to resolve the conflict on their own, or whether or not they wanted a mediator to help in the resolution of the conflict.

When a particular student indicated that he/she was ready to re-enter the class, the CIRT notified the teacher and paraprofessional that the student had been in conference with her. The staff was also instructed to keep abreast of

what the student was doing just in case there were indicators that confrontation might erupt. After the re-entry to the class, the CIRT checked periodically as to the progress of the student.

She also met with the student later to determine whether or not the techniques he/she intended to employ were used, and if they were utilized, what were the results. She also used this time to give encouragement to the student.

Conflict Resolution Activities/Workshops

During the orientation, conflict resolution was also introduced to the students. It was explained that they would be alerted to different ways to resolve conflict. They would engage in activities that demonstrated different skills to help mediate conflict with either peers, staff, family, or community residents.

The intent was to awaken students to other choices to conflict rather than the ones they normally used, which usually led to escalation of the conflict. Their new skills would enable them to solve conflict in ways that were more acceptable to traditional societal expectations including the school system and the community at-large.

Conflict resolution workshops began a week after the initial orientation. Lessons were divided in different segments. The first lesson identified why there was a need for conflict resolution curriculum. The lesson included

"brainstorming" ideas about the term, conflict resolution, and then soliciting from students an operational definition. They were then asked to give examples of different conflicts encountered by them.

The lesson intended to help students recognized that conflict is normal and is part of everyone's experiences. However, students were also made aware that there are peaceful approaches to resolving conflict.

The second lesson explored the question, why conflict takes place and dealing with feelings that underlie the conflict. Students discussed in-depth feelings when tempers flared. The third through sixth lessons guided students in an exploration of different types and styles of conflict resolution (avoidance; "time-out - cool-out;" confrontational; problem solving: conflict resolution and mediation). Students re-created different confrontations they encountered and role played possible strategies.

Communication skills essential for conflict resolution were thoroughly investigated and analyzed in the next series of lessons. Students discovered that voice tone, body language, and body movements made a difference in either escalating conflict or minimizing it.

Students recognized that "body language" is a key to communication, and often-times is a more powerful influence than words. Students were exposed to ways they could express themselves without provoking conflict through body

mannerisms. Furthermore, they learned to listen attentively without showing negative responses through body movements.

Students recognized that the choice of words could make a difference; Using "I" messages instead of "you" messages helped students to take responsibility for actions, and not put the other person on the defensive. Students were shown that they could express true feelings without disrespecting ("dissing") someone or making themselves appear weak.

Listening skills were also a critical part of communication and resolving conflict positively. Students engaged in role playing activities that demonstrated how listening to what a person said could often times clarify positions and minimize conflict.

Lesson 11 involved students in "working it out skills" based on real life conflict or simulations. Students developed an agreement plan ie., they were expected to learn to be sensitive to the other person's viewpoint(s), and learn how to compromise when and if necessary.

Lessons 12 and 13 engaged students in mediation techniques. Students were introduced to the idea of using a third party to resolve differences. They were told that appealing to a third party to resolve differences was a sign of intelligence and not weakness. They were asked to comment on the former concept. Students also were introduced to the idea that they could be a mediator as well as anyone else.

Lessons 14 and 15 concentrated on building self esteem

and the relationship of friends in their lives. The two-part lesson examined situations and competencies in the students' lives that made them feel good about themselves. The students highlighted other constructive ways of building positive self esteem.

The students also explored the impact of friendship in their experiences. They outlined the attributes of some of their friends, and examined how choices in friends influence decisions and behavior. Students also investigated techniques to utilize when trying to avoid negative peer pressure, while simultaneously understanding that they could feel good about themselves for making decisions that averted confrontation.

Conflict resolution curriculum was scheduled for once a week. The school's schedule prevented students from having an assigned class for conflict resolution. The lessons were taught during the social studies or English class. Each lesson began with a summary of the previous workshop. The writer thought this policy served as a review for participants and a quick overview for any student who was absent. Many of the lessons extended over several days. What is also important to understand that materials did overlap.

For the workshops, the writer used many resources from commercial packages. She modified some of the materials and expanded others. She also used ideas from agencies who specialized in conflict management techniques, and utilized

a number of their suggestions regarding the content of material.

Conflict Resolution/Peace Making Room

The students were notified that the CIRT's office would be the location for resolving conflict and also for mediation. The room was structured to accommodate the intent of the room. Masking tape divided the room in half with two sets of chairs on either side of the room, with a third chair in the middle. The rules were outlined on the walls.

The students had to agree that they would abide by the rules. To emphasize the rules, the mediator read the rules or had the students read them, or orally explain them before the mediation began. The rules stated that the students were not allowed to leave their section of the room under any circumstances. They were allowed to express their feelings without mocking the other person or calling him or her names ("dissing"). They also had to listen to the other person without interrupting. The last rule outlined indicated that they would not leave the room until all parties were satisfied that the conflict was mediated to their satisfaction, and no further conflict would develop from this incident. In addition, to avoid a ripple effect or escalation of the conflict, the parties agreed that there would be no further discussion with others except to indicate that the conflict was resolved.

The mediator always began the discussion by complimenting the students for taking the first step to resolve the problem.

Extracurricular Activities Within the School

As mentioned in a previous section, when many of the students engaged in recreational activities, they ended up in confrontation with their peers. Indicators of the confrontation included arguments, verbally abusive language, and physical confrontation. The writer theorized that if the students participated in extracurricular activities, it will give the writer an opportunity to monitor them, and give them opportunities to practice their conflict resolution techniques in a supervised environment.

She also believed that if students were engaged in positive activities during leisure time, it would help them understand how to manage time more constructively. She hypothesized that students might be more willing to engage in constructive leisure-time activities in their communities if they were exposed to them in the school.

The writer organized tournaments using board games familiar to the students. They played Checkers, Connect Four, Cards, and Dominoes. They also participated in intramural basketball, volleyball, and two talent shows.

For several holidays, the students participated in a series of family style dinners in which students dined with

staff.

Extracurricular Activities - Community Projects

Students engaged in several community projects. They painted fire hydrants and swept parks. The writer had expected to involve students in more community projects. However, the writer's time restraints prevented her from arranging more projects.

Unplanned Interventions

Journal Writing

The writer asked students to keep a journal of techniques they employed, or other interventionists used to resolved conflict they encountered with their peers, staff, or community residents. It was a technique for them to share how they resolved differences they encountered in-between class sessions whether or not the conflict occurred in school or in their community environment. What developed was an effective technique for students as well as becoming an outlet for them to express their feelings. Some of the students wrote letters occasionally to the writer. Their writing was very personable and emotionally laden. Further discussion will be in a subsequent section.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Many of the students in the special educational setting exhibited consistent negative behavior that often was violent towards peers and staff as well as disruptive of classes. The anti-social behavior was ubiquitous in the school setting; occurring in academic classes, vocational education, the gymnasium, and in the lunch room. Students were argumentative, verbally abusive, and physically confrontational to peers and occasionally to staff.

When the behavior wasn't overtly negative, it was covert. Students were uncooperative or unresponsive to directions, and reluctant to complete class assignments. They walked out of classes and openly violated rules such as leaving the building during the lunch hour.

In an attempt to remediate the negative behavior, and help students to exhibit pro-social behavior, the writer initiated, developed, and implemented a combination of strategies. She used Life Space Crisis Intervention, taught Conflict Resolution Techniques, encouraged students to write journals, and engaged them in extracurricular activities.

Results

Expected Outcomes

The writer anticipated several outcomes to be reached. Outcome # 1. 16 of 20 students will decrease the instances of negative behavior by at least three fewer instances.

This outcome was not realized. In the discussion section, there will be a thorough analysis of this outcome and the writer's insights regarding the difficulties of achieving an objective that she realized during implementation was impossible to be achieved.

Outcome # 2. Five of eight students identified as consistently involved in fights will decrease the occurrence of fights by at least three fewer instances.

This outcome was accomplished. The targeted students displayed fewer instances of physical confrontation. The writer believed that the outcome was accomplished based on several factors and not solely due to the intervention strategies specifically mentioned above. Other students chose to avoid an altercation by walking away from students who were "bullying' them.

Outcome # 3. Ten students will engage in at least three extracurricular activities in the school.

That outcome was attained. Nearly 18 of the twenty students participated in more than three extracurricular activities within the school environment.

Outcome # 4. Five students will participate in at least one collaborative school/community project.

Fifteen of the students participated in two designated community projects of their choice.

Outcome # 5. At least ten of the twenty students will show evidence of perceived self-esteem improvement by having at least three more positive responses on the post test as compared to pre-intervention comments on the self esteem inventory.

This outcome was not realized. The writer has several possible explanations why this outcome was not accomplished.

Unexpected Outcomes

Expression of Feelings

A number of students were able to write their feelings on paper. In general, it allowed students to emote, release anxiety, and focus on issues that were of concern for them. In one particular case, a student was able to receive counseling that may have helped him deal with serious psychological problems.

Feeling Significant About Themselves

Although the results were not indicated in the self esteem inventory, the writer observed positive indicators from students when they were capable of negotiating affirmative solutions to conflict. For example, students

displayed smiles, bolstered that they used techniques to avoid having verbal and physical confrontation. They actually shared techniques with the writer, and recreated situations for the class to observe. For example, one student ran to the writer to tell her she wouldn't believe what happened. He proceeded to tell the writer that he had a problem with another student that day, and he walked away rather than have a confrontation. When the writer inquired how he felt, he boasted that he was proud he successfully employed the technique.

Discussion

Decrease in Physical Confrontations

Several of the writer's outcomes were realized. Six of eight targeted students decreased the number of physical confrontations (What the writer wants to note for the reader is that two of the original targeted students were replaced with different students. One student was assigned to another cluster within the same building in order to be given more support services for his volatile behavior. Another student was transferred to another site - to an environment where he was engaged in intensive job preparation while in class with fewer students. The replacement students targeted for evaluation also had a history of physical confrontations as noted through observation). One student had excessive absences, and therefore his fewer number of confrontations

is clouded.

Several factors contributed to the reduction in the number of physical confrontations between students and the fewer incidents of fights in the lunch room. Students engaged in extracurricular activities during their lunch period which resulted in fewer incidents of violent behavior in the lunch room. However, that strategy was effective because it was implemented with conflict resolution techniques. Prior to implementation of the practicum, there were other attempts to conduct activities during the lunch time with a minimum amount of success, ie., the number of fights remained constant in spite of the activities. The writer believes that the present system of holding tournaments coupled with exposure to conflict resolution techniques contributed to the decrease in the number of physical altercations during the lunch hours.

During the tournaments, the writer witnessed a number of the students employing the conflict resolution techniques to resolve arguments. For example, when the students were about to argue over a move or engage in some other dispute, they called the referee to intervene rather than pursue the argument. This is a far cry from previous behavior. This behavior substantially curtailed the number of arguments during the lunch period, thus decreasing fights.

There was also a concerted effort by staff to encourage students to participate in the tournaments as observers as

well. The students who were not playing, focused their attention on watching tournament games rather than having nothing to do. Since they had something constructive to do during their leisure time even when they were not playing, the amount of idle time was reduced.

The decrease in the number of confrontations in the lunch room could also be partially attributed to other reasons. Students were assigned to designated tables. This administrative tactic decreased the number of confrontations among students because classes or students who were adversarial for whatever reasons were separated from each other. Furthermore, staff selected specific stations so it allowed for effective monitoring and supervision of st dents. The students also knew where staff were in case they needed assistance or help with some matter.

Extracurricular Activities

Students engaged in several other extracurricular activities that differed from the lunch room competition. The writer's rational was to involve students in different initiatives so that they would experience consistent pro-social activities in environments other than the lunchroom setting.

Students participated in decorating the auditorium for various assembly programs. They also decorated the hallways for seasonal events such as the winter festivities (Christmas, Kwanza, Chanuka etc.) national holidays, and

other special events. They also performed in talent shows. Other activities included intramural basketball and volleyball. While a number of these events were done previously, the difference this time was the students were encouraged to take a leadership role, initiate the activities, and solicit other students to assist them in the preparation of the event as well as participating in the projects.

There were also new activities. One of them was a Thanksgiving festival. The students proposed the idea, decorated, set the tables, and contributed to the family style dinner. The staff and students agreed to have the dinner at another site so that it would be especially unique for them. The students's behavior was extraordinarily cooperative.

Students also became very involved with sending cards when one of the staff members suddenly became critically ill. They took it upon themselves to create giant get-well cards and send them throughout the building for students and staff to sign. They sent constant reminders to the ill staff member that she was missed, thought of, and loved.

During the summer months, six students participated in cleaning the parks, and ten others painted the fire hydrants and street light poles in the neighborhood. For their involvement, the students were awarded certificates by community activists.

The writer was pleased with the students' involvement. She thought that this was a start to improving relationships with the community, as well as an incentive for the students to contribute to the community especially since the students have been accused of destroying property and writing graffiti on walls.

When teenagers are involved in constructive activities they have less time to be idle. Exposing them to different activities might encourage them to make more resourceful use of their time even without coaxing from adults.

Unexpected Outcomes

There were other critical outcomes that could not be measured statistically, but were very meaningful in the process necessary for students to change from exhibiting negative behavior to pro-social solutions to conflict. For example, the writing of journals and letters evolved into a very effective technique for students.

> No matter who the adolescent is or how she [he] lives, personal writing can provide an authentic means of self-expression, a new and different route to self-awareness. For an adolescent at risk, it can also provide a certain distance between feeling and doing, a way to help her [him] think before she acts. (Musick, 1993, p. 21)

The writings served multi-purposes. They were informational for the student. They helped them to

recognize techniques they employed to resolve conflict as well as a way to share techniques used. What was even more critical, was that the writings were a positive channel for students to express their feelings. This often allowed them to release aggressive thoughts, which in turn diffused the potential for negative behavioral response to anger. The following letter is an example.

To Miss C.

A new kid in class is getting me upset. He was talking to another kid in 530 [class 530] about me. He says that I am GAY. I told him I am not. He was looking at me. I do not like it at all. The F...kin' kid is going to get F..ked one day. I am going to be in a fight with him.

So Miss C., can you talk to him about teasing me. I hate it so much. Thank you. It makes me sick.

Robert [not his real name]

The writings gave the students an opportunity to ask for help while focusing on what was bothering them. The personalized letters also enabled the CIRT to understand and respond to some of the crises in the students' lives that negatively influenced their behavior in different domains.

In some cases, the students were referred for additional help after a one-to-one conference with the CIRT, and getting their approval to tap other supports. The psychiatrists from related services were better equipped to

help them navigate through some of their difficulties. For example, the following is a copy of a letter a student wrote that indicated immediate intervention was critical.

The Way I Feel

A lot of times I feel pain, anger, upset, depress. How do you deal with these four feelings? I wish I knew so I can deal with them. Sometimes, I ask people what do they see when they look into my eyes. They see a lot of pain, at least that's what they tell me. Some people say I'm crazy because I think about death a lot more than before. I even wonder what it would be like if I was never born.

My mother tells me a lot of things that hurt me a lot, and if someone tells you often you start to think if it's true. Maybe it is true. I was put here for a reason. I wish I know what it is because I'm getting tired of feeling like sh.t. I may look happy but I am not. I try not to show my feelings. I just need someone to talk to. But when it comes time to talk, sometimes I have nothing to say.

I wish life was easy but it is not. It is hell. Things happen to me because it was meant for it to happen. Maybe I can end it all. But, that is really a bad idea so I can get that out of my head.

I have a lot of good ideas and thoughts also stories. I can write, but who will read them. I want them to be shown not put in a desk and be forgotten about. My stories have feelings. Sometimes, I feel like crying, but crying wouldn't

help. I miss a lot of things in life. I feel that I'm missing life. Maybe I'm letting life pass me by. It can't be stopped. But, when you look around nothing changes. Everything is the same. It can be that I am missing something, but what? Maybe a girlfriend or a best friend. I have friends but they are not that close. I hope I get help because I need it badly. I'm 19 ears old. The things that are important to me are family, God, girlfriends, best friends, me. I'm last because I feel like I'm not important. That's the way I feel. Always, most of the times.

Michael [not his real name]

A couple of staff also took advantage of the writing technique to help them express frustrations they were experiencing. Similar to the students, the writer approached the staff members after reading the letters to see if they wanted to further discuss their concerns. Both staff members wanted one-on-one conferences to further articulate their frustrations.

In other situations, students requested conferences with the CIRT for the purpose of receiving additional coaching regarding the resolution of a conflict or to avoid possible confrontations. The student would come to the CIRT with a specific problem and ask for advice. The CIRT role played with the student the situation so as to assist him/her with different techniques. During the role playing, different responses were rehearsed to prepare the student

for possible rejoinders.

For example, a female student came to the CIRT for advice regarding a male student who wanted to date her. She did not want a serious relationship and wanted the student to remain a good friend. She rehearsed different scenarios so that the encounter would not become confrontational or argumentative.

The CIRT always followed-up with the students, either formally or informally. In the illustration, mentioned directly above, when the CIRT inquired about the results, the female student responded affirmatively that the situation was resolved, and seemed genuinely elated that the writer inquired as to what happened with the dilemma. The writer reassured the student, and invited her to consult with her whenever she needed advice or support.

Feeling Significant

Students felt important when they employed the techniques to diffuse conflict and the results were affirmative. The writer was not surprised about how the students' pride was positively affected. Life Space Crisis Intervention focuses on students' responsibility and the Conflict Resolution Techniques taught emphasized that the students could control the results of conflict. A peaceful solution was within their grasp. "Students acquire a sense of significance from doing significant things, from being active participants in their own education " (Kohn, 1994, p. 282).

Outcomes Not Accomplished

Two of the writer's expected outcomes were not realized. Why were the outcomes not fulfilled especially when the practicum assumed objectives that were supposedly reachable? Several factors negated outcomes from becoming reachable.

According to the self-esteem inventory, there was absolutely no difference in the self-esteem of students after implementation as opposed to their self-esteem prior to implementation. These results should not be surprising when one reviews the most recent literature about self-esteem. "...Violent behavior does not typically result from low self-esteem, nor do people skilled at conflict resolution always seem to have high self-esteem" (Kohn, 1994, p. 274).

Harter (1990) also comes to a similar conclusion when she states that adolescents will associate with peers who will accept them. In some cases, adolescents' negative behavior is validated by their peers thus the possibility of improved self-esteem although the behavior is destructive.

Musick (1993) maintains that internal psychological forces heavily influence adolescent behavior patterns and responses to environmental conditions. Although her literature focused on teenage mothers, her comments are analogous to teenagers in general. Many adolescent teenage mothers who live in environments that "accept" teenage pregnancy, the acquisition of new attitudes and skills

jeopardizes their relationships with their families and friends. They are reluctant to separate from those who they are like and are bonded to emotionally. They reject the positive alternatives and effective supportive programs that may improve their living conditions.

Similarly, the student who is accustomed to displaying negative behavior endangers his relationship with peers who expect and anticipate certain behavior although that behavior is contrary to the larger community's expectations. The student is risking his place in the sun with his peers, a very strong influence in his life, and therefore is unwilling to change behavior because there is a definite chance he will be rejected by his peers.

Does that mean that expecting affirmative outcomes from teaching conflict resolution is unrealistic? The writer believes that conflict resolution curriculum can be more effective if introduced earlier in students' lives as well as incorporating it with intensive workshops that involve students' becoming more in tune with feelings, their role in society, and how they fit in the context of community.

Another reason for repeated negative behavior could be the result of the environmental conditions that influence the students. If the communities where many of the students live are inundated with violence, and physically fighting for survival and acceptance are every day occurrences, they will resort to negative responses to resolve conflict. For

some of them, if they walk away from a fight in their neighborhood, it might be their doom.

The pro-social behavioral changes that the writer hoped to realize still can happen but the process is slow, and will take a lot more time than eight months for the student to internalize. [They must first internalize a new pattern of behavior so that the pro-social behavior is consistent.]

The other students also have to begin to buy into the new concepts. As more and more students demonstrate pro-social behavior in response to conflict, more students will follow their example. As mentioned previously, it has happened in specific circumstances.

Students did not decrease their negative behavior by three fewer incidents. The writer realized that certain behaviors were so frequent that it was part of their behavior pattern and it was impossible to monitor. For example, one student left the room without permission six times during the day. That was the least of the behavioral problems to be monitored because he had so many more serious behavior patterns that had to be addressed. The writer actually stopped logging the incidents, and targeted to correct other serious problems such as verbal or physical confrontations.

Conflict Resolution Classes

For the most part, the conflict resolution classes went smoothly and the majority of the students participated. They engaged in role playing, simulations, and discussions. They were very articulate.

The rules were spelled out and followed. Students engaged in interesting conversations and were capable of role playing previous incidents without resulting in fights or arguments. For example, two students had an altercation the previous day to the lesson. They role played the exact problem and actually reminded each other if a detailed was skipped. They agreed to what occurred and how the situation was resolved without anyone intervening. This was a tremendous step for the students. Prior to implementation, if the students attempted to recreate an incident, the confrontation would have escalated further.

On occasions, there were problems in the workshops. A couple of fights and verbal confrontations actually occurred during the classes. In one incident, a student vocalized his disapproval of conduct by students that irritated the class. The accused students became defensive, and then verbally aggressive. One of the students actually smacked another student across the face before the CIRT could intervene. Suspension was the consequences.

Two classes were reluctant to participate in the workshops. They saw no benefit to the curriculum. Those two

classes had the most aggressive students and were in need of techniques. These students victimized other students and saw aggressive behavior as the only answer to conflict. They believed that might is right. Many of the lessons became heated battles. They theorized that the real world is aggressive and violent; the only way to survive is to confront. Was it fruitless to teach them?

The writer believes that at least the students were thinking about their behavior because they articulated reasons, and examples of why their solution was the most fitting. The writer responded that each case needed to be examined, and offered them other alternatives when they gave examples of encounters in which they were confrontational. Some of the students appeared to falter when simulations were recreated that showed how the results could have been different.

Life Space Crisis Intervention

Life Space Crisis Intervention was effective. Students were reminded that the interventionists were not there to hurt them, but to help them. Students were helped to redirect their anger. The thinking process involved them recognizing that they were responsible for escalating conflict, and they also were in control of diffusing confrontation. For example, the student knows that once the staff intervened in a fight, the student's focus should be

on the staff person so as not to continue the fight. The student then was taken to the "cool down room". During the conference, the student was guided through a process that helped him/her articulate the incident and the steps leading to the conflict. The CIRT asked several questions to help the student recognized what role he/she played in the dispute. This procedure helped to diffuse anger, and decreased the number of secondary conflicts arising out of the original incident.

Community Participants

The writer expected to involve community residents in the implementation of the practicum. She had all intentions of inviting them to be guest speakers. However, it never materialized. The writer was inundated with different responsibilities in addition to the implementation of the practicum. She does plan to eventually bring speakers in to talk with the students because she firmly believes the additional support would be beneficial to the students and to her.

Conclusion

Changing any behavior is a process that takes a great deal of time. A variety of support systems must be employed to help the student change. The behavior must be modeled and reinforced. For that to happen, facilitators and other significant people in the students' environments must role

model the purported accepted behavior.

The writer noted that although there was no difference in the feeling of self-esteem, some of the students displayed a sense of significance and capability that many of them never experienced before. The writer believes that this positive sense of being valued and feeling important evolved because the students were actively engaged in the resolution of conflict with others.

Students were exposed to the different choices for solving conflict. They were encouraged to examine, explore and employ them to settle conflict. Many of them opted to use avoidance, others sought a third mediator. They voluntarily came to the "time out" room to seek the help of a third party to mediate the problem rather than resolve it with physical or verbal altercation. Based on the histories of many of the students, this was a dramatic first step for them.

The positive outcome of feeling significant about themselves if truly internalized could be the beginning of a total transformation of the student in different domains. If the student feels he/she is engaged in part of the process, part of the solution, he/she may be more willing to do for themselves, and change behavior.

Recommendations

Conflict Resolution classes were held during English and Social Studies classes. The writer found this schedule difficult. Sometimes, teachers and students forgot the writer was coming even though they might have been reminded. This contributed to confusion that could have been avoided.

Because of the intensity of the problem, conflict resolution, should be part of the permanent curriculum on a daily basis as early as the elementary schools for all students. Students diagnosed as emotionally handicapped need additional supports such as anger management skills. The writer feels that in too many incidents, the students are placed in special education settings with smaller size classes to address only their academic weaknesses. Their emotional needs are neglected with the exception of counseling that so often is infrequent.

In addition, parents and siblings should be engaged in workshops as well. This latter suggestion may seem unrealistic especially when one considers the number of parents who refuse to attend parent teachers conferences. However, if parents are exposed to the workshops early in the school life of the child, when attendance patterns of parents at meetings is more constant, the results may be more positive. Targeting the entire family, helps to support efforts, and reinforces techniques because the skills would be adapted by key models in the lives of the students.

What is a another problem is the realization that conflict resolution techniques need to be taught in the communities. Health centers, afterschool and evening programs, job training programs all need to participate in a program to reduce confrontation if there is going to be a drastic reduction in negative and violent behavior displayed by students.

Dissemination

The writer has plans to disseminate the material through several sources. She has already begun to employ life space crisis intervention and conflict resolution techniques with other students. In the after-school/evening program where she is employed, staff have participated in seminars so that they are able to apply the techniques as well as understand what the participants are learning. The elementary and junior high school students in the center are already involved in conflict resolution workshops. A local newspaper was on-hand for one session (see Appendix D).

Parents have also been informed of the workshops for the children, and have been encouraged to participate in the program.

The newsletter published by the center will be used to disseminate information about conflict resolution. Participants will be asked to express their comments about the workshops, and what benefits if any, have they learned to use to resolve problems, especially with peers.

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APPENDIX A

BEHAVIOR RATING SHEET

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BEHAVIOR RATING SHEET

Student's Name_____Week of_____

Behavior	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Walked Out of Class					
No Work/or Participation					
Verbally Abusive to Peers					
Verbally Abusive to Staff					
Destroys Property					
Leaves School					
Physically Abusive to Peers					
Physically Abusive to Staff					

Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B

ATTENDANCE SHEET

APPENDIX B
ATTENDANCE SHEET

Activity_____Date_____

Name	Class

APPENDIX C

Self Esteem Inventory

Appendix C
Self-Esteem Inventory

Student's Name_____
(Optional)

Place a number that you feel best applies to you next to each statement.

1. All of the time
2. Most of the time
3. Doesn't Apply to me
4. Seldom
5. Never

----I must be loved, liked, and approved of by everyone all the time or I will be absolutely miserable and will feel totally worthless. *

---- I have to be absolutely 100 percent perfect and competent in all respects if I am to consider myself worthwhile. *

---- People who are bad, including myself, must be blamed and punished to prevent them from being wicked in the future. *

---- When I make a mistake, I get frustrated and quit trying. *

---- When I make a mistake, I hate myself for it. *

---- When I make a mistake, I don't get angry, I just try it again. *

---- My personal value does not rest on how perfect or competent I am. Although I'm trying to be as competent as I can, I am a valuable person regardless of how well I do things. *

---- You must fight when challenged or people would think you're soft. *

---- I am successful in school.

---- When I look in the mirror, I like myself.

---- My classmates think I am a nice person.

---- My parents scream in anger because they think I do too many things wrong.

---- My teachers like me as a student because I do my work.

* Johnson as cited in Johnson & Johnson 1991

Appendix D

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

A76 NEWSDAY, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1994

About **BROOKLYN**

Catherine Cabeza works with students during program run by St. Francis Xavier's Action Youth Program.

'Godsend' Grants

Citizens Committee spreads $26,000 among neighborhood groups

By Carn Matthews
STAFF WRITER

For Rae Beth (Margaret) Maye, who grew up in the permissive '60s and whose lifestyle reflected that time, teaching children sexual abstinence is a necessity.

Maye, who is the Midwood and East Flatbush coordinator for Free Teens USA, says she was spurred to become involved by the two-pound, premature baby she had several years ago.

"It was the things that I did as a teen that made my baby not strong," Maye said.

The group, whose motto is "Save Sex, Not Safe Sex," teaches prevention of HIV, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy prevention.

The Citizens Committee for New York City recently gave a One City grant of $400 to the group, which will use the funds to recruit new volunteers and give audio-visual presentations in Brooklyn high schools.

The Citizens Committee, which was founded in 1975 by the late Sen. Jacob Javits, gave out about $26,000 in One City grants this year to organizations all over the city to support neighborhood volunteer initiatives.

"People who are trying to organize in their neighborhoods need to learn how to do that . . . and get across racial and ethnic and other kinds of boundaries," said Michael Clark, president of the Citizens Committee.

For some of the 46 organizations that received grants, such as the Queensboro Hill Community Church in Flushing, the grant was a "godsend."

The church, which runs an overnight shelter in Flushing, recently finished refurbishing a bathroom. "That left us just about broke," said Jim Lawlor, the shelter coordinator. The shelter will use some of the $900 grant to buy food, a serving cart and a space heater, Lawlor said.

For other groups, recognition was as important as the remuneration.

"You've been slogging through the mud all these years, wondering if anyone's doing the same thing," Maye said. The grant is like "millions of dollars in support," she added.

Clark said with cuts in government funding, the need for people to organize is even more critical.

The committee also gives out awards for neighborhood and school beautification, environmental and drug and crime prevention. It gives grants to building and block associations, youth group projects, and individuals who promote racial and ethnic understanding.

Annette Frances Hall, director of St. Francis Xavier's Action Youth Program in Park Slope, said the awards publicize positive programs and activities.

"Sometimes we don't often know who's out there doing what they're doing," Hall said. About 450 children participate in the program, which was awarded a $450 grant.

For more information about the committee, call (212) 989-0909.

St. Francis Xavier's Youth Program, Park Slope: $450 St. Francis Xavier will conduct a bimonthly series of seminars for youths on multiculturalism culminating in a cross-cultural carnival. The highlight of the carnival will be a banner created by community residents representing racial harmony. One City money will help purchase a video and books for the seminars, fliers and art supplies.

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